

## [J. A. Joiner]

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Range-lore

Ruby Mosley

San Angelo

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### RANGE-LORE

J. A. Joiner of San Angelo, Texas was born July 15, 1855 in Itawamba County, Mississippi and came to Burnett County, Texas, in February, 1870. The Joiner family is outstanding for longevity in life as well as their physical make-up. Mr. Joiner is proud of his physical strength and at the age of 85 he boasts of being able to run several blocks to the store and back, stating that he knows no one else his age who can compete with his actions. His favorite pastime is making, by hand, long butcher knives out of saw blades, finishing them with a pistol handle. He relates his experiences as follows:

"I was out sparking one night when I killed a horse instead of an Indian. Back in the good old courtin' days we rode horseback and meandered through the woods. Me and my girl were riding out in the moonlight when I saw something walking in the C12 - Texas 2 Page two

shadows of the trees. The object came nearer and nearer, rattling the brush. I fired, to kill, and that I did; we rode over to see the dead Indian but to our great surprise we found a dead horse.

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"Me and another kid went hunting one night; we carried our dogs and guns, walked and walked, through the woods, until we grew tired and cold. We were really afraid to build a fire as it might attract the Indians, then we became colder and braver until we had courage enough to build the fire. All that time we had one eye on the fire and the other looking for Indians. I looked around and saw two eyes shining through the darkness and fired my gun. When we inspected my victim that time it was my favorite hunting dog. We returned sorrowfully home, I discovered later that an Indian's eyes didn't shine through darkness.

"When I was a young kid, I worked for the Bidwell family and my bedroom was in the rear of the house where I could easily see the barn. On bright moonlight nights I would sit on the side of my bed with my Winchester ready for an Indian raid on the horses. Night after night passed without disturbance. Soon the Indians came in midafternoon and got every horse on the place. The very best horse that we had, got away from the Indians and found its way home. That was the only horse of that bunch we ever saw again. The family never knew until then that I watched the horses at night, which was my own idea. 3 Page three

"Some Indians found their way to my neighbor, Riley Harper's place, and stole his horses. Riley got on their trail and followed them from San Saba to the Brady section. He cut down on an Indian and shot his leggin's off and the Indian didn't stop to pick them up but kept running. Another Indian came by horseback and picked up the wounded Indian. We never knew if he died or not.

"The Battle of Pack Saddle, fought in Llano County between Indians and ranchmen in 1873, marked the last battle with the Indians in that part of the state. The ranchmen were well prepared for the attack; when they came in and were not permitted to contact the horses. The battle lasted several hours in and around the Pack Saddle Mountains. No whites and only one Indian was killed. The Indians carried him behind the Pack Saddle Mountains and buried him with rocks.

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"Mr. Tedford had a little son by the name of Lum who was about four years of age and liked to play in the sand. One day Lum had ventured out into a little road that ran near the house. A band of Indians rode by, grabbed the child and rode for the bushes. A group of men formed a searching party and got on the Indians' trail. They were eating dinner when they were found. The party began firing and the Indians ran for the brush, leaving the child behind. The men called little Lum and he ran to safety.

"Those old Indian days were days of dread and fear. I never want to see them again. I often hear the old fellows 4 Page four

yelping about the present times and wishing for the good old days to return. Not me, I am well pleased.

"John Smith, who was a relative of the Jackson family and lived at San Saba, told me that all of the Jackson family was killed by the Indians except two children that were captured and carried away. The Indians had gone about one hundred miles and camped where the children had escaped by some means and had started home. The men had formed a searching party and met the children as they were well on their way home. John Smith was a brother-in-law of the notorious Ketchums, of the San Saba and later of the San Angelo sections.

"One time, an Indian boy about sixteen years of age got lost from his tribe and was about to starve to death. He went up to old Daddy Brown's house in Richland Springs and begged for food. Of course the Indian could not speak English but when one is starving, signs can be well interpreted. Daddy Brown fed him up a few days and sent him on his way.

"The government made some kind of a treaty with the Indians in 1873 which stopped their depredating.

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"Llano and San Saba Counties had their share of outlaws and under-world characters. The rough element was feared by a little German settlement in Llano County that decided among themselves that they needed protecting. They planned a little trap that caught one of the most dreaded crooks, Mose Beard. They were glad to put this rough character under earth.

"John Beard, a brother of Mose, had been running wild 5 Page five

with him and felt it his duty to get his man. There were about twelve in the little gang that killed Mose. John went in and killed every one of them and skipped out. The friends and enemies left behind heard that John was killed at a fandango, in Old Mexico. Later I met up with a friend that had visited John and said that he had become a successful rancher in Old Mexico.

"Frank Cooley, George Gladden, and John Ringo were killers but I never knew their outcome. There were many more outlaws of that section that I can not safely mention."  
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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

J. A. Joiner, 80 East 18th Street, San Angelo, Texas, interviewed March 23-28, 1938.